**Gender and Work  
Looking into Gendered Household Labor with the GSS**

We have been studying gender and household labor. In this project, we’re going to take a look at data on perceptions of household labor and other related matters. Examine the tables below and then answer the questions.

**Data Background:**The [General Social Survey (GSS)](http://gss.norc.org/) is a nationally-representative survey of American households, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. The GSS measures attitudes, attributes, and behaviors of American adults and is a major data resource for social scientists. The GSS was annual from 1972 to 1994, and it has been biennial ever since, resulting in 30 surveys in 44 years with 59,599 respondents. It has a response rate 70% higher than other major social science surveys and 40-45% higher than the industry average ([NSF 2007](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf0748/nsf0748_3.pdf)).

**Analysis:**In MA 207 and SO 331, you will learn the statistical tools to analyze these data in greater depth and with greater certainty to understand the strength, direction, and statistical significance of relationships between variables. For now, we’ll use a rough “rule of thumb” to understand trends. That is, if there is a 10-percentage point difference between figures when comparing across columns OR across rows, then we’ll suspect we have something further to explore. Note the 10% is an arbitrary figure, used for pedagogical purposes.

**Table 1. HUBBYWK1**   
Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:   
“A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family.”

Below is the percentage of men and women who agreed or strongly agreed within each generation in 2012. *(Note: Millennials were born in 1981 or after, Generation Xers were born from 1965-1980, Baby Boomers were born from 1946-1964, and the Silent Generation was born from 1928-1945;* [*Pew 2016*](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/11/millennials-surpass-gen-xers-as-the-largest-generation-in-u-s-labor-force/ft_15-05-11_millennialsdefined/)*).*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Generation** | **Men** | **Women** |
| Millennials | 19.4 | 16.1 |
| Gen X | 15.5 | 17.9 |
| Baby Boomers | 27.3 | 17.5 |
| Silent Generation | 49.3 | 30.9 |

1a. Are there differences between the sexes (within any given generation)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

1b. Are there differences between the generations (within either sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

1c. These data are from 2012. What do you hypothesize we might find if we looked at these data across time (say, 1972, 1992, 2012)?

**Table 2. HHWKFAIR**Respondents were asked, “Which of the following best applies to the sharing of household work between you and your spouse/partner?” Below are the data for heterosexuals in 2012.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Men | Women |
| I do much more than my fair share | 6.5 | 34.3 |
| I do a bit more than my fair share | 9.1 | 27.2 |
| I do roughly my fair share | 44.1 | 32.1 |
| I do a bit less than my fair share | 27.4 | 4.3 |
| I do much less than my fair share | 12.9 | 2.1 |

2a. Are there differences between the sexes’ perceptions? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

2b. If you “collapse” some categories (e.g. adding up “much more” and “bit more” and adding up “bit less” and “much less”), do the differences between the sexes still hold?

2c. If men’s and women’s perceptions are accurate, what would we expect to see for the category “I do roughly my fair share” that we do not see?

2d. What other variables might affects men’s and women’s perceptions of their own contributions to the household labor?

**Tables 3a-d.**Below are tables representing the percentage of men and women in 2002 and 2012 who said that they “Always” or “Usually” were the one in their relationship responsible for these four dimensions of household labor.

3a. LAUNDRY1 “Who in your household does the laundry?” (Always or usually me)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Men | Women |
| 2002 | 14.5 | 68.8 |
| 2012 | 13.3 | 66.7 |

3a1. Are there differences between the sexes’ perceptions of who does the laundry (within a given year)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

3a2. Are there differences between the years (within a given sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? Does the change over time fit with or contradict what your expectations would be? Why?

3b. REPAIRS1 “Who in your household does small repairs?” (Always or usually me)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Men | Women |
| 2002 | 79.5 | 14.6 |
| 2012 | 83.5 | 10.4 |

3b1. Are there differences between the sexes’ perceptions of who does the small repairs (within a given year)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

3b2. Are there differences between the years (within a given sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? Does the change over time fit with or contradict what your expectations would be? Why?

3c. CARESICK1 “Who in your household cares for sick family members?” (Always or usually me)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Men | Women |
| 2002 | 11.4 | 59.2 |
| 2012 | 7.2 | 55.4 |

3c1. Are there differences between the sexes’ perceptions of who cares for the sick (within a given year)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

3c2. Are there differences between the years (within a given sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? Does the change over time fit with or contradict what your expectations would be? Why?  
  
3d. COOKING1 “Who in your household prepares the meals?” (Always or usually me)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Men | Women |
| 2002 | 18.5 | 64.5 |
| 2012 | 16.1 | 63.8 |

3d1. Are there differences between the sexes’ perceptions of who prepares the meals (within a given year)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

3d2. Are there differences between the years (within a given sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? Does the change over time fit with or contradict what your expectations would be? Why?

**Table 4. MEHHWORK**

Below are the percentages of men and women by generation who said “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the statement: “Men ought to do a larger share of household work than they do now.” (Data are from 2002, the most recent year these data were collected.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Generation | Men | Women |
| Gen X | 49.2 | 64.7 |
| Baby Boomers | 62.7 | 75.9 |
| Silent Generation | 66.3 | 60.5 |

4a. Are there differences between the sexes’ wishes for men’s responsibilities with household work (within any given generation)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

4b. Are there differences between the generations (within either sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

4c. Overall, how do Americans feel about this issue?

4d. How do these attitudes differ from the behavioral data in Tables 3a-d? Why do you think there is a difference between attitudes and behavior?

**Table 5. MEKDCARE**

Below are the percentages of men and women by generation who said “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the statement: “Men ought to do a larger share of childcare than they do now.” (Data are from 2002, the most recent year these data were collected.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Generation | Men | Women |
| Gen X | 62.9 | 71.7 |
| Baby Boomers | 70.1 | 77.6 |
| Silent Generation | 73.7 | 72.0 |

5a. Are there differences between the sexes’ wishes for men’s responsibilities with childcare (within any given generation)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

5b. Are there differences between the generations (within either sex)? Where do these differences meet the 10-point rule? What might explain these differences (or lack thereof)?

5c. Overall, how do Americans feel about this issue?

5d. How do these attitudes differ from the behavioral data in Tables 3a-d? Why do you think there is a difference between attitudes and behavior?

**Figure 1. HHWKFAIR & EARNSHH**

Figure 1 represents the percentage of men and the percentage of women in 2012 who feel that they do less, equal, or more housework than their spouses. These respondents are in couples in which the *man earns more* than the woman.

F1a. When husbands earn more money, how much housework does the largest proportion believe they do, relative to their wives (i.e. what is the largest section of the men’s column)? How much housework does the largest proportion of women believe they do, relative to their husbands?

F1b. When husbands earn more money, who does the largest proportion of men believe does the majority of housework? Who does the largest proportion of women believe does the majority of housework? What is the difference between these two figures? Why do you think there is a difference?

F1c. If these men’s and women’s perceptions were accurate, what would you expect to be different in this chart?

**Figure 2. HHWKFAIR & EARNSHH**

Figure 2 represents the percentage of men and the percentage of women in 2012 who feel that they do less, equal, or more housework than their spouses. These respondents are in couples in which the *woman earns more* than the man.

F2a. When wives earn more money, how much housework does the largest proportion believe they do, relative to their husbands (i.e. what is the largest section of the women’s column)? How much housework does the largest proportion of men believe they do, relative to their wives?

F2b. When wives earn more money, who does the largest proportion of men believe does the majority of housework? Who does the largest proportion of women believe does the majority of housework? What is the difference between these two figures? Why do you think there is a difference?